

# Students and Smoking: The Perils Explored

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Approximately 44 Americans die every day due to murder; 1,195 Americans die every day from their addiction to tobacco, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Should smoking be the leading cause of preventable deaths in America? That is for you to decide.

According to the CDC, "Each day, about 6,000 young people try a cigarette, and more than 3,000 of these young people become regular smokers—that's more than 1 million new smokers a year. Of all young people in the United States who are currently younger than age 18, more than 5 million will die prematurely from a smoking-related disease."

Maricopa County Tobacco Use Prevention Program (MACTUPP) has a program to educate the children of

Arizona. The program has three areas of concentration: prevention, cessation and secondhand smoke. Prevention provides tobacco education to 300 schools, youth and community programs. Cessation provides free "Quit Smoking Classes." Secondhand smoke provides education and technical assistance to business and community leaders about the dangers of secondhand smoke.

MACTUPP is funded by smokers. According to Laurie Thomas, promotions director for Maricopa County Tobacco Prevention, about 23 percent of taxes charged on a pack of cigarettes (approximately \$1.18) goes to fund this program. She says, "The prevention program utilizes research based prevention curricula for fourth through eighth grades. The prevention team also focuses on school tobacco-free policy enforcement through poster and slogan contests and special activities, like Kick Butts Day, Great American Smokeout and World No Tobacco Day." Thomas has observed students during the classes, and she has found that students are eager to participate.

